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# APPENDIX H

## HEAD LICE INFORMATION PACKET FOR SCHOOLS

This Sample Information Packet contains the following:

- 1) Facts about Head Lice
- 2) Recommendations for How to Treat Head Lice
- 3) How to Comb for Head Lice
- 4) Sample Letter from School to Parents

These materials may be reproduced by any school in part or as a whole  
and may be modified to suit particular situations.

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## Facts about Head Lice (Pediculosis)

People have many false ideas about head lice.

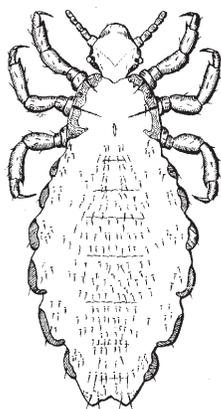
1. Head lice are not a reason for panic or extreme measures.
2. Head lice are not a sign of uncleanness.
3. Head lice do not favor any particular socio-economic level—they attack rich and poor alike.
4. Head lice are not something to be ashamed of.
5. Head lice do not carry serious diseases.
6. Head lice cannot jump or fly.
7. Head lice cannot live on pets.

Head lice infest the hair, suck blood from the scalp, lay their eggs (commonly known as nits) on the hair shafts, and cause itching and some additional discomfort when present in large numbers.

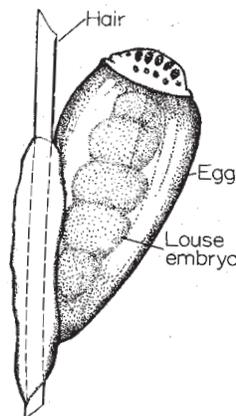
They are very easily transmitted from one person to another, primarily by close personal contact with head hair. They can also be transmitted by sharing personal items like combs, hair brushes, hats, or other articles of clothing on which infested strands of hair or adult lice are present. Rugs and upholstered furniture can sometimes be a source of hair strands with nits.

Below are drawings of an adult louse (1/8" long, yellowish-grey), a nit (1/3" long), and hair debris that can be mistaken for nits. The eggs are white when they are first laid and darken to a coffee color before they hatch.

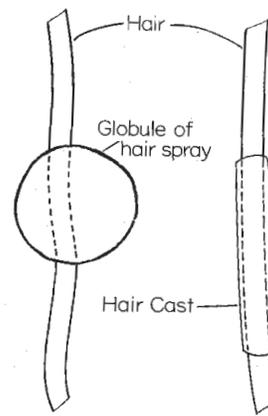
Notice that nits are always oval-shaped and attached to only one side of the hair shaft, usually close to the scalp.



Adult Louse



Nit



Hair Debris

They are attached with very strong glue and cannot be as easily removed as dandruff and other hair debris. There is no safe solvent for this glue.

The female lays 6-8 eggs/day. It takes 7 to 11 days for the eggs to hatch and another two weeks to develop into reproducing adults. Adults live for up to 30 days and spend their entire life on the human head. If they do move to other surfaces, they must return to the head within a few hours to survive.

In order to prevent multiplication and spread, the adults and the nits must be killed.

We encourage you to add a quick, weekly inspection for head lice to your regular personal hygiene routine for children between the ages of 6 and 10 (younger if the child is attending pre-school or day care). A magnifying glass can help you to see the nits.

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## Recommendations for Treating Head Lice

In order to bring the current head lice problem under control, the following procedures are recommended:

1. Inspect your child's head. If you find lice or eggs (commonly called nits), continue reading. If you find no lice or nits, you don't need to do anything; however, it is a good idea to continue checking your child's head frequently.
  - (a) Separate the hair with a rat-tailed comb.
  - (b) Check all areas of your child's scalp, especially at the back of the neck and behind the ears—these seem to be the favorite spots for lice.
  - (c) Adult lice are found close to the scalp. Nits are attached to the hair 1/2 to 1 inch away from the scalp. Nits may be found farther out on the hair strands in long-standing cases. There may be anywhere from a few to several hundred nits in a child's hair.
  
2. If you find lice or nits, coat the hair with salad oil and comb out the lice and nits with a special metal lice comb. You can buy these combs in a pharmacy. Do not use the plastic combs provided with some pesticidal shampoos; they can allow nits and lice to slip through unnoticed (if you cannot find a metal lice comb, ask your pharmacist to order one from the Hogil Pharmaceutical Corp.).

Refer to the attached sheet entitled "How to Comb for Head Lice" for combing instructions.

You can get rid of lice just by combing. It is not necessary to use shampoos with pesticides. In fact, these shampoos are recommended only as a last resort in extreme cases.

- Do not use shampoos with pesticides on infants or children under 2 years, or on pregnant or nursing women.
- Do not use on anyone with open cuts, scratches, or head or neck inflammations.
- Do not use in the shower or bath; use over a basin or sink. Expose only the scalp to the pesticide.
- Never use lice shampoos to prevent lice infestations. Check the child's head first. If there are no lice, don't treat.
- Do not use extra shampoo or leave the shampoo on the hair for longer than the directions specify, and do not use on the eyebrows or allow any shampoo to get into the eyes.
- Store these products out of the reach of children, ideally in a locked cabinet.

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3. Comb, Comb, Comb! This is the only way to remove the nits. Repeat the combing every week until you find no more lice or nits. Be forewarned that if the child has very long or very curly hair this process will be time consuming. You may want to consider cutting the hair.
  4. Examine all members in the household. Treat them as above, if lice are found.
  5. Do not use the lice spray included in some of the lice shampoos. Lice cannot live in the environment and sprays unnecessarily expose everyone to pesticides.
  6. Wash bed linens and recently worn clothes in hot, soapy water in a washing machine and dry in a hot dryer. This does not have to be repeated daily. The washing is only necessary when you treat the child or when he/she is re-infested. Articles that cannot be washed can be vacuumed or placed in a plastic bag and sealed for 2 weeks. This will kill all lice and nits.
  7. Clean combs and brushes by soaking them in 1 teaspoon of ammonia and 2 cups of hot water or heating them in a pan of hot water for 5-10 minutes.
  8. If your time is limited, it is much more important to comb the child's hair than to spend time washing clothes and linens and vacuuming your house.

**REMEMBER:**

- It takes time to comb all the nits out of the hair, BUT, this must be done, and done frequently, until the hair is free of evidence of lice and nits.
  - Combing is an inconvenience, but remains a parent responsibility and only total parent cooperation and follow-through will stop the spread of lice.
  - You will probably find that your child actually enjoys the combing.
9. Check hair the morning following treatment to be sure it is nit-free before allowing your child to return to school.
  10. Until the lice epidemic has passed, school personnel will be examining children's heads each morning. Any child with nits or lice will not be allowed to attend school.
  11. If your child is re-infested, comb the hair again with the lice comb rather than applying pesticidal shampoo. Use these products only as a last resort.
  12. Instruct children and adults not to share combs, brushes, hats, and other articles of clothing that might be contaminated with strands of hair.

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## How to Comb for Head Lice

**NOTE: We do not recommend shampooing with a lice shampoo that contains a pesticide except in extreme cases and as a last resort.**

### A. You will need:

- Salad oil.
- A special metal lice comb. These are available in drugstores (ask your pharmacist to order one if you cannot find a metal comb). Do not use the plastic combs that are included in some lice treatment packages. These are not effective.
- A wide bowl of water with a squirt of dishwashing detergent added. This water is used to kill nits (eggs) and lice combed from the head.
- A box of facial tissue.
- A strong lamp with a flexible arm that allows you to rotate it to direct the light wherever you are working. (If it is possible to do the combing in the daylight near a window, it will be much easier to see the adult lice and the nits.)
- If the hair is long, many large bobby pins or hair clips, to pin up sections of hair that have been combed.
- A large towel to place around the child's shoulders during combing.
- Two comfortable seats, one for the child and one for you. You want the child to be just below your eye level.
- Something entertaining for the child to do that does not require much physical activity, such as reading, drawing, playing with plastic clay, or watching videos.
- If the child has very long hair, which takes more time and tries the patience of the child, two people can work together on different parts of the head.

### B. Preparing the Hair

Cover the child's hair with salad oil (any kind will do). This will prevent the hair from tangling and make it very easy to use the lice comb. (The oil may also smother some of the young and adult lice, but you cannot count on it.) Oil has the advantage of not drying

out if the combing takes a long time. After you finish combing, shampoo the hair twice to remove the oil.

### C. The Combing

1. Seat the child so that his or her head is just slightly below your eye level.
2. Brush or comb the hair (use a large-toothed regular comb) to remove snarls.
3. Separate a mass of hair that is slightly wider than the width of your lice comb and about 1/2 to 3/4 inch in the other direction. Separating the hair into such small sections is important so that you can more easily see nits and adult lice.
4. Hold the mass of hair with one hand. With the other hand, hold the lice comb in a slanting position with the curved side of the teeth toward the head.
5. Insert the comb into the hair as close to the scalp as possible, since the eggs are first laid within 1/2 inch of the scalp. Pull the comb slowly through the hair several times.
6. Comb one section at a time and check each section to make sure it is clean, then pin it out of the way, curling it flat against the head.
7. Whenever you comb out nits or live lice, dunk the comb in the soapy water. Make sure the lice and nits are off the comb before you use it on the hair again. Frequently remove the hair and other debris from the comb with a tissue. When the tissue becomes soiled, place it in the bowl of soapy water. When the bowl is full, flush its contents down the toilet and refill the bowl with soapy water.
8. When all the hair has been combed, wash out the oil by shampooing twice.
9. Once the hair is completely dry, check the entire head for stray nits and remove those hairs individually with a pair of small, pointed scissors (like nail scissors).

### D. Cleaning up

1. Soak the lice comb in hot ammonia water (1 teaspoon of ammonia in two cups of hot water) for 15 minutes. Metal combs can also be boiled in plain water for 15 minutes. A comb cleaned either way

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can be reused by many different children.

2. Scrub the teeth of the comb with a nail brush or an old toothbrush to remove debris. Remove dirt lodged between the teeth of the comb with dental floss or a small stiff brush.
3. Boil the towels for 10 minutes or wash them in a washing machine in hot, soapy water, and follow with a hot dryer.

Note: There is no safe solvent for the glue that the female louse uses to attach her eggs to the hair even though there are products that make such claims. Combing is the only sure way to remove nits from hair.

**WARNING:** *If you must use a shampoo with a pesticide,*

- **Do not** leave the shampoo on any longer than the time specified, and do not use it more frequently than indicated on the label. Follow the directions exactly.
- **Do not** use on the eyebrows or allow any shampoo to get into the eyes.
- **Do not** use on pregnant women or nursing mothers.
- **Do not** use on children under 2 years.
- **Do not** use on anyone with open cuts or scratches or with head or neck inflammations.
- **Do not** use in a shower or bath where the pesticide can reach other parts of the body. Shampoo hair over a basin or sink.
- **Use gloves** to do the shampooing.
- **Do not** count on lice shampoos to kill nits. You must comb to get them out.
- **Never use** any head lice shampoos preventively. Before you treat, make sure that live lice or eggs are present.
- **Return to combing** if the lice shampoo is not working; it may mean product failure or that the lice have become resistant to the pesticide.
- **Store these shampoos** out of the reach of children, ideally in a locked cabinet.

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## Letter From School To Parents

Dear Parents,

There have been a few cases of head lice detected in your child's class. Attached is information on head lice and their treatment. Your child will not be allowed to return to school unless his/her head is free of nits (lice eggs).

Sincerely yours,

School Principal